

I HAVE been trying to make head or tail of the Martin Luther King-FBI wiretapping controversy. There are still many unanswered questions but, as one of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover's greatest admirers, I am sure that the FBI Director would never undertake a wiretapping job unless he was forced to do it.

No one knows the anguish that Mr. Hoover has gone through every time a new Attorney General has been sworn in. I can see the scene now:

"Mr. Hoover, I have decided that Raquel Welch must be wiretapped. I am giving you authorization to do the job."

"Oh, sir, please don't make me do it. The thought of listening in on someone else's conversation fills me with despair."

"I'm not interested in your personal feelings, Mr. Hoover. As Attorney General, I have to worry about the security of this country: if it means tapping Raquel Welch, then we must do it."

"But it's such a nasty business. Why can't we live and let live?"

"DON'T GO soft on me now, Mr. Hoover. We're in a tough business and we can't allow emotion to enter into it."

"It isn't just me, sir. It's my agents. They just cringe when they have to wiretap an American citizen. If the person says something personal that we're not supposed to hear, it will be on our consciences for the rest of our lives."

"I admire your ethical stand, Mr. Hoover, but there are times when the Justice Department must be kept informed as to what is going on in this country and the FBI is the only organization equipped to do the job."

"That's true, but we have to think of other factors. Suppose Life magazine, or the newspapers got hold of our wiretaps? Wouldn't we be violating the person's constitutional rights?"

"How could Life magazine or the newspapers have access to the FBI wiretaps? After all, we're not going to let them out of our hands, are we?"

"But you don't know how persistent the press can be.

They just keep calling and calling, asking for the transcripts of people we've tapped, and after a while it's hard for us to say no."

"I ADMIT it is a hazard, but I should think that after all your years as head of the FBI, you'd know how to keep the wiretaps confidential."

"I can see why you would think that. But sometimes I get so mad at something written about me that I just lose my temper and release the taps to Life magazine."

"I wouldn't ask you to tap anyone, Mr. Hoover, but we have to find out what Miss Welch is up to. And while I am sympathetic to everything you say, I must insist that you follow my orders."

"Oh, the shame of it. What have I done to be forced into such a distasteful assignment?"

"Now please, Mr. Hoover, don't get overwrought. I'll tell you what. I'll sign the authorization for the wiretapping so that you can keep it in your files, and then in later years if anyone accuses you of wrong-doing, you can blame it on me."

"I'd be so grateful if you would, sir. I want to go down in history as a man who never tapped another person's phone unless ordered to do so from above."

"You're a good man, J. Edgar, a good, good man."

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**Wiretap Order  
 Dismays FBI**